

## THE THRILLING ADVENTURES OF DICK ANTHONY OF ARRAN :: TALBOT MUNDY

THE Anthonys were ever an untamable breed, unbowed by circumstances, and though the last but one, the present laird, was a sport from the true type, Richard, the last of all of them, was the most uncompromising, the most indomitable of the lot.

"What good are you?" demanded his uncle, Major Anthony. "What can you do?"

"I have to thank circumstances," smiled Richard. "I can swim, I can ride, and I can sail a boat against any man I ever met."

"That's it!" swore his uncle, blowing up with rage. "Sail a boat! That's all you can do! That's all you own beyond a suit or two of clothes! Sail a boat!"

"I mean to," said Richard. "I'm only waiting for you to talk business first."

"What business, Balderdash! What do you think I'll do for you? A failure!—a disgrace to the Anthonys! Not one penny! Not one halpenny!"

"You're disturbed, aren't you? The estate provided for you while there was a chance to pass an examination. That ceased when you failed for the Indian Civil. To inherit, an Anthonys must be one or other of the services. You know that. You failed. What are you here for? I'll support no able-bodied man!"

"Did you ever fight one?" wondered Dick.

"What do you mean?"

"I'm giving you your choice. You fight or you pay me a thousand pounds: a thousand pounds was provided in the will for every Anthonys in line of succession on entering any of the services. I want that thousand."

"You want—I've heard of impudence!" his uncle snarled. "You either fight or pay," smiled Richard without moving.

"I mean I'm entitled to the money and I've come for it. Don't answer yet. Listen! Just before old MacDougal died he told me how much you paid him to break my leg by accident. He quoted your actual words—'If he's not there, MacDougal, at examination time there'll be a hundred pounds for you.' He showed me the actual hundred—the actual bank notes you gave him. He offered them to me. His son Andy has the hundred now; he knows where it came from and for what, and he has come to get me to take it."

The Major's jaw dropped, but he spun on his heel in an attempt to bluster.

"What mare's nest is this?" he spluttered.

"He admitted that you bribed him, and I thrashed him for it just three weeks ago today. He and I are quits. He put the admission in writing and I had it witnessed; my lawyer has it now."

The Major said nothing, thoughtfully. An officer—presumably a gentleman—found out at such expedients for saving money, is perhaps wiser if he does say nothing.

"Under the circumstances," continued Dick, "I applied for a commission in a hurry, and saw a lawyer. I know where I am and where you are. I've come for that thousand, and I'll take it now or fight—now, understand—not tomorrow or the day after—now! I give you from now exactly five minutes to come to a decision! No, don't try to leave the room—I've got my eye on the bell, too—thirty seconds are up! Think, man—your better think!"

After one wild glance around him for a way of escape, Major Anthony sat down and thought deliberately.

"I'll pay," he said quietly, pulling out his check book, just as Dick snapped his watch shut. "It's extortion, but I'll pay."

Dick watched him write the check, and watched him write and sign a letter to the Lamplish bankers in confirmation of it.

"Now I'm off," he said, putting both into his pocket. "You'll pay my four hundred a year to my lawyer, or he'll be after you to know why there's only one thing more before I go—the sword—I'm here—I've a right to it—I want it."

"No," said Major Wallace Anthony. "Possession, said Dick, walking to the mantelpiece, is nine points of the law."

He took down a wonderful old claymore, basket-hilted, with a very old scabbard, and held it up to the light. It had no scabbard; and though the blade had been kept polished by almost unnumbered generations, the weapon looked older than the mantelpiece.

"I'll take it with me," said Dick, "and if you want it back, you'll have to fight for it on one condition, of course. The day a direct heir is born I'll bring it back if I'm at the other end of the world. Falling in—remember the written evidence I hold against you—and don't let me catch you again! Good day!"

Holding the strange sword by the blade, he strode out, straight up the road to Lamplish.

"Where away, Mr. Dick?"

The voice and the accent were a Scotsman's speaking English with a wonderful accuracy of learning newly won.

"Away, that's all," said Dick. "Just away."

"I've the sword, I see. I'm glad you have it. You'll be going in the yacht?"

Dick nodded.

Andy was six foot inches the taller of the two and looked even bigger in his uniform.

"Where are ye goin' Mr. Dick? Where away?"

"Africa—Tunis—Algiers—Egypt—anywhere."

"Take me!"

"No."

There was a pause while they eyed each other, half admiring, half angry, recognizing the fact.

Forgetful of his uniform, he held out a great flat like a club with hairs and freckles on it. Then he remembered and changed to a salute. Dick reached his own hand out (and it was only very little white); Andy seized it, and was satisfied.

"If I could have you into the old regiment, Andy, I would have been proud to have you for a servant. It was decent of you to enlist on my account. As it is, you're in and I'm out; you can't get out and I can't get in. Do your best to be a credit to the regiment. Good-by."

Andy saluted him again and stood at gaze as Dick walked off. Neither looked back until they were out of each other's sight.

After that Dick freed his hawser—threw it inboard—and jumped after it. He stood at the little hatch's helm until his head-dress drew, and then sat down comfortably, headed down the Firth of Clyde with wind and tide aiding.

But not even Dick had ridden out a storm such as swept the whole of Western Europe for six weeks or more that summer.

He fought to finish with the biggest bully he could find—the North

## THE SWORD OF ISKANDER

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asked him, with a smile that won his heart.

"No, no, leddy—na-na! We're gamin' Alexander, on the train the night."

She smiled again and left him feeling as if the Sphinx had grown young again and had laid siege to him.

And that evening as he stood on the station platform outside Dick's reserved compartment, he pointed out the princess and her little retinue fussing on to the train.

"She's a vera fine woman, sir—verra fine!" he assured Dick, with an air of confidence. "Name, sir? Her name's the Princess Krakatochewitch. She's French. From France."

No woman went in or out of the Hotel Tewfik Pasha without the benefit of Andy's notice, and there was one he particularly favored; she had round, brown eyes, and a dainty smile, and she spoke so little English that he had to repeat things over and over again.

"If it is the business of a maid to

"Well—my man is all those things—and more! My man is English, and a rebel—for I heard him say it! Now for the legend, though! It must be a prophesy—those always take the popular fancy best. Let us say—Iskander was to come again—in Alexandria, the city that he built and named after himself—he was to come holding a two-edged sword with a berry in the hilt, given him by some god."

"It sounds like legend—like genuine legend."

"Then start the legend on its rounds!" exclaimed the princess, with the air of a teacher who has worked out a small boy's problem for him.

"But—"

"It is time to act! This man, who can lead if he is made to, has booked his passage for tomorrow at daybreak."

"But—"

"Filmi Fared—who is the arch conspirator? Who stands more committed

"I buy many of these men—and they know me. I am a known buyer. My agent knows the ropes. Let me send for him, and tell him to investigate."

"I'd be awfully glad if you would," said Dick, wondering how a woman could seem so young and speak so resolutely, and know so much.

So a Levantine named Henri was sent for, and dispatched in search. Very little more than an hour later he returned, and found Dick pacing up and down on the walk outside the hotel; and he knew—though Dick did not know—that both of them were watched through shutters of a first-floor window. He led Dick close up underneath the window before he spoke.

A syndicate of thieves has bought the sword, sir, from the man who stole it. They say they will only deal direct. Will you come at once? If you will keep at a little distance so that



"You have your choice between a kingdom and death."

and involved than any other man? Who would be the forfeit if the English did not suspect his treachery? Ch—Filmi Fared! And—English—who-by a word or two by a hint dropped here and there—could send him—Filmi Fared—to the six-foot drop and the hempen rope, to dance by the noon on nothing but the who could pour all that good Russian money through her fingers—and could pour more—could—ah—hadn't you better begin your rebellion—Filmi Fared? The hour and the man are ready—Russia has paid and waits."

"Where is your man?" demanded the Egyptian.

"Here, in this hotel."

"He knows nothing. He is opportunity. He must be seized, and used! You must make him prisoner—must hold him while the legend starts on its rounds—must show him to others—must compromise him, so that he dare not go back on you—must force his hand—and then strike, while the elements are fat and the officers play polo and make love! And—do you hear me, Filmi Fared—you must begin tonight!"

That evening when Dick had finished dinner, and had started for the steamer where his luggage was supposed to be all stored by this time, Andy set off to swagger through the streets and let the ladies look him over. In lieu of a cane he carried the sword, and he served as well. Her reflections were broken into—or perhaps continued—by the opening of the door. Filmi Fared bowed himself in, with both hands folded in front of him and his brown eyes fixed on the floor.

She stepped up to him and took his arm—led him to a couch—and stood there facing him, after compelling him to sit. He sat quite still, except that one hand stroked his gray-streaked beard.

"News," he asked. "Your messenger said news." He spoke French perfectly.

"Yes, News! I have the man for you."

Her young eyes that hinted so much devilry flashed as his old ones could never do. "I have the leader, Filmi Fared—listen! There is little time. A king, named Alexander, once gave this man a sword. Is it not delicious? Where are we in Alexandria, now? Who named it so? Alexander the Great—Iskander, as they call him—eh? Iskander, then, since our plot is laid in Arabic, gave a sword with a berry in the hilt to this man's ancestor. Is that clear? Have you no imagination?"

"These are great lands—and times—for breeding legends," he remarked.

The princess laughed. "Have you one ready made, or must we invent one?"

"I was searching my memory."

"Bah! Let us invent. What is the legend of this Alexander? The legend, not the truth. He is almost a god, is he not? Full-golden-headed—dignified—served by a giant—fearless—would the description fit him?"

"Is popular imagination—yes."

no one will suspect, I will show the way."

"And," called Dick, and the giant stepped out of the shadows, nearly frightening Henri out of his yellow skin; dumb with terror he glanced upward at the window. The shutters moved a trifle—forward and then back—ward—twice, silently, and Henri lost his fear. He made no objection then to Andy's following Dick.

Following their guide carefully, but keeping to the side of the street, they passed to him, Dick and Andy treaded mazy side streets until they came at last to the dingiest, shabbiest part of Alexandria. Andy and Dick drew closer, Dick leading, but Andy so close behind that no man could have slipped between.

The guide crossed over at last—grinned in the sickly light of a small barred window—knocked a drum signal on the panel of a door, ten feet inside the door directly it was opened—and beckoned.

"Let me go first," swore Andy, thrusting himself past, heaving the Levantine to one side and rushing in. All he found was a pitch-dark passage and an old hag, nearly blind, who held a candle lamp. She peered up at him trembling and muttering.

"It's all right, Mr. Dick!" he called. And then he started, to find Dick beside him. He winced as Dick grabbed his arm.

"You impudent ass! The only man who dare take my mind is a better man! Get to your place behind!"

He went on, nearly tripping over muscles laid out and through the door to the street, then strode straight on alone down the unit passage.

Dick took no notice of him when the giant brought up to him, breathing hard, at another door.

The Levantine made more signals, and that door opened, too. The hag dropped out of the procession, and they went on in utter darkness—left, right, left—the guide calling out directions from behind and striking occasional matches to assure himself.

Finally Dick paused at a narrow doorway on his right, that yaped blacker than the rest had done.

"That's right, sir," the guide called; "straight in there!"

Dick went ahead, and Andy followed close behind him. Suddenly the door closed on them—sliding in grooves, not swung—and they heard some kind of bolt go home with a well-oiled click. They were shut in, tight, in blackness of which they could sense the narrow limits. There was neither light nor ventilation.

Then both men heard something, and stood listening in silence. There were voices—the low, steady hum of a hundred voices—in a room beyond. Dick felt his way along the baked-brick wall. He felt up and down for a latch or lock, or keyhole, and found none. So he strode across the little room from wall to wall to measure it. There were ten clear feet of floor space.

"Lie down, Andy—on your back—feet against that wall—head toward this other door—that's it."

Andy obeyed unquestioningly. Then Dick laid his own strength down in

line with Andy's, with his feet on Andy's shoulders.

"Understand me—when I give the word, I want you to shove like hell!"

"Ready, sir," said Andy, gathering Dick's legs in his mighty arms and filling his lungs.

"Shove ahead!"

Dick felt the heft of Andy's shoulders through his boots—heard the hunch of leg muscles crack, as the six feet five grew straight. His own hands—neck—shoulders—flattened and grew numb against the door—his own leg muscles nearly burst—and something gave.

Both men gasped and strained again—the still hot blackness shook and filled with yellow streaks—the grating of splintered woodwork.

In an instant they were on their feet—purple-faced with effort—hair disheveled—tremendous in the door frame. For an instant more they stared about them, blinking in the glare of light and trying to get focus. Then Andy leaped forward.

"I see the sword!" he yelled.

But Dick's outstretched arm prevented him, and he found himself jerked back again. Dick, too, had seen what Andy had. His eyes were fixed on a table-end at which sat Filmi Fared. He coughed at least a hundred men had opened doors in the middle, and there was a clear gangway down the center of the room. The sword—out of its canvas case—lay in front of Filmi Fared, and he looked from it to Dick, and from Dick to the sword again.

"Give me that sword!" commanded Dick.

No one moved. Then Dick strode forward, suddenly, Andy closing up behind him, covering his master's back with his own huge bulk. In a second Dick had the sword, and was examining it to make sure that Andy's bearings were still safely in the hilt. It was there! In his knee he swung it, and brought it to a whistling, humming shiver in the air.

"Zindabad Anthony Sh—!" yelled somebody. And that was Persian. Dick understood it—knew what it meant. In twenty tongues the crowd yelled to the answer, "Long live King Anthony!"

Unthinking—but possibly with the vague idea that he was proving own sword—Dick swung the sword aloft again. The crowd yelled a salvo of applause and a flashlight streamed out. There was no camera visible—only a suspicious looking box affair in one far corner of the room.

"These gentlemen," said Filmi Fared, standing up, "are the sworn representatives of sixty-eight thousand armed men who are at present in secret rebellion against British rule. The movement is world-wide—it is named Pan-Islam—but our present plans are confined to Egypt. We have waited only for a leader. You have been chosen as that leader. You are required to take an oath of allegiance to our cause—the Koran—on the Bible—and on your sword. You are required to swear that when you have been raised to the throne of Egypt you will reign constitutionally. And you are required to commit yourself in writing before these witnesses. You should sign here."

Dick threw back his tawny head and laughed aloud.

"You sign, or you die," smiled Filmi Fared.

Filmi Fared was about to speak again, but he was interrupted by a signal on another door, at the end of the room opposite to that through which Dick and Andy had burst in.

The signal was answered, and another one replied again. Then the door opened, and closed again behind a woman, veiled to her heels in black. Her shawl happened to be Dick's, and Dick wondered where—and when—he had seen just such slippers.

With a walk that was inimitable—almost a familiar—he walked down a gangway, through the crowd, straight up to Dick. She tapped him with a fan.

"You are the uncrowned King of Egypt," said the woman, in French—for all the room to hear. Then she said it again in Italian, and in English, and in Arabic.

Decidedly uncrowned, smiled Richard, and he knew what to say.

"You must remain a prisoner until a story—a legend we have started—reaches its required destination. It reaches tonight—like ripples of a pond, when a stone is thrown into it. It will travel fast. In the meanwhile, you had better sign. You are offered more than you perhaps realize."

"I don't know what to say," said Dick, and he knew what to answer.

She turned to the crowd and swept it with a majestic look.

"Leave me alone to speak to him!" she ordered.

The crowd drew back to the farthest wall. But that did not satisfy her; she waved them away.

"You have your choice between a kingdom and death," said the woman, standing close and facing Dick with her fan. She spoke in English now.

"Thanks awfully," laughed Dick. "You are said to be Iskander, come to lead the army of the East. That is the story that has gone out tonight in ever-widening rings. In a week all Egypt will believe it. In a month, in two years—when you have all Egypt at your feet—you will be dealing with the great powers—acknowledged King of Egypt! Can you not see that these fools—these weak men—whom you have led—will then be your fools—your tools—you will be king and they your instruments? Is Richard Anthony afraid? You were not afraid to speak your mind to a high commissioner! Lead, man! Lead on! You are known for a rebel! Lead these other rebels!"

"I'm quite sober," said Dick, "and I'm not a drunk fiend. You've chosen the wrong man."

"You're a proud man, aren't you?" she purred. "You are thinking of your honor, n'est ce pas? Well—it is gone. I don't want lead such an outfit as yours." He answered her, "If the King of England offered me the job?"

"Imberle! Do you suppose that these men will risk letting you out of here unless you sign that paper there?"

"Who are you that ask?"

"Ah! My identity must always be a secret," said Dick—and he shot one arm out—a long, left arm that gathered her, and drew her to him, screaming. Then the beryl-hilted sword performed a task for which it had never been intended. It split the long black shroud that draped her to the heels. He pushed her away again, retaining her mask in his left hand, and she stood gasping in a pink and cream and diamonds—the Princess Karageorgovich.

"I think we both had a very narrow squeak for it!" she said in exquisite English. "But—" and she tapped him with a remonstrating finger—"you owe me for a two-horse carriage, Mr. Anthony! Remember—I shall claim the debt!"

Oiga Karageorgovich—indignant—flushed—more handsome and more beautiful than he had ever thought a woman could be—Satanita at her savagest. "Help! Help! Kill him! Let him die, now! Slay him! He is a traitor—would betray us! Kill!"

There was a rush and Andy seized a chair. A hundred—more than a hundred—surged through the doors from either side. A knife, launched by a big Italian in the middle of the door that Dick had burst, whizzed at him—was seen as it flashed under the light—and stopped—caught in the sword hilt.

"Take it, Andy!"

"Dick's eyes were on the big Italian, but he waited long enough for Andy to reach out and wrench the knife from between the steel of the basket hilt. Then he moved—and the Italian fled—leaving a gap in the doorway where he had been. And the football field at school had taught Dick what to do with an opening."

It was a fight that Sudanese might envy while it lasted—all rush and slash and thrust and roar and movement—a terrific impact—the hot, delicious feel of blood, backscattered as the sword went in—the crash of a broken chair on human skulls as Andy widened the breach that Richard carved—a charge into blackness, where the cold steel was all that glimmered—and a burst, wild hurrah into God's good midnight air when the carriage waited at the corner and a driver slept.

Dick leaped for the box and Andy sprang after him.

"Madame—where is madame?" asked the driver, waking up. But Dick's fist took him neatly underneath the jaw, and he toppled into the street gulping.

By guesswork, and by sheer dead reckoning, Dick drove at the most prodigious fog for the shore—for the darkest part of the harbor front.

Dick and Andy were in the carriage, and a lash of the whip sent the horses galloping free in the direction of the city, with the empty shriek of a wind in their wake.

"Look!" said Dick. "Jump for it!"

There was a boat, with three rowers in it, moored to a buoy some fourteen feet out from the shore. The rowers slept. Dick jumped first. He landed absolutely in the middle of the boat, and fell headlong over one of the natives, frightening him almost out of his skin. Andy followed with a groan and a monumental effort. He hit the water, like a whale descending, four short feet. Dick bawled him in.

"Know the Themistokles?" he asked.

"The other harbor, eh? Well, take us there—give way—hurry up!"

The still sleepy native crew gave way. They were too accustomed to the manner of the revolutionaries. The drunken first-class passengers from ships to be suspicious, and too interested in the money they would earn to headlong when the rowers rowed for half hour's row—for they had to search for the little boat, brought them alongside, and a sleepy watchman welcomed them.

"How much do you want?" asked Dick. "Ten shillings," said the owner of the boat.

"I'll give you a pound," said Dick. "If you'll let me along here till the steamer leaves."

"Very good, sir," said the boatman, with a grin.

"A pound," said Andy with a wee face, "is an awful lot of money, sir!"

"It is," said Dick. "It would cost you more than the steamer if you went back to the city and told tales."

The Themistokles—one thousand tons—one class of steamer—grounded on a flag-mixed cargo—anything for a where—was due to start a little after dawn.

Andy went below—unpacked certain valises—changed into dry clothes, and stowed away the sword. They forth the two of them paced up and down the little afterdeck, one on either side, and Andy prayed, Dick fuming, and both of them taut-strung to jumping point.

They exchanged no word. They walked the deck and waited, each knowing what the other thought too well to waste breath.

"Andy," said Dick after a while, when the tenth false alarm had set their hearts to fluttering against their door. "At the first port of call, move alongside, and fell into step."

"To cut a long story short, Andy, my man, if we get out of this mess safely, this is where we part company. I shall be a free man, and you will be an independent man of means. Now I'm a fugitive! Then, I could have a certain income from home at any time, and I could have a certain income. Now—I have considerably less than a thousand pounds, and positively no prospects. Are you listening?"

"Yes."

"I've been photographed with a drawn sword, surrounded by a crowd of known criminals. I suppose about a hundred men were in a court of law that I am a rebel. You follow me so far? Very well. I've no right to drag you down into my quagmire, and I've no intention of doing that. At the first port of call, provided we get away from here—I shall pay your passage back home again, and buy you a draft on Glasgow for five hundred pounds. That will put you where you were before. Do you understand me?"

"Is that all, sir?"

"That's all."

"So?"

"I was before you accepted my service, as ye call it? I was in the water—swimming—verra nearly drowned. Ye're big enough—ye're strong enough—ye put me back in again—I gave ye leave. Then—I'd be where I was. Ye've a right to do that—an' no more."

Dick smiled a little. He was not much given to displaying the more serious emotions; they lay too deep.

"I didn't ask you to follow me to the first place," he asserted.

Andy's face lit up, and he foreclosed—and Dick held out his hand.

The little liner's whistle screamed impatiently, but with due consideration of the cost of steam. A launch came alongside, and disturbed some passengers. The companion ladder was hauled up and in. The steamer screamed again. The which began to swallow steel chain with a roar as the windward screw came home.

Then the little ship's propeller started turning with the steady, hypnotizing thud that calls more men than alive. The sails of Alexandria began to fall away astern, and the chance of arrest grew insignificant.

He felt a pluck at his arm, but he did not turn. Then a more deliberate tug at his coat drew his attention, and he looked round—straight into the eyes of the Princess Oiga Karageorgovich!

"I think we both had a very narrow squeak for it!" she said in exquisite English. "But—" and she tapped him with a remonstrating finger—"you owe me for a two-horse carriage, Mr. Anthony! Remember—I shall claim the debt!"